



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8
999 18TH STREET - SUITE 300
DENVER, CO 80202-2466
Phone 800-227-8917
<http://www.epa.gov/region08>

Ref: EPR:ER

POLLUTION REPORT
Elkhorn Range Field Spill
Billings County, North Dakota

I. HEADING

Date:	April 17, 2003
Subject:	Crude oil spill
POLREP No.:	Initial and Final
OSC:	Floyd Nichols
Agency:	EPA - Region 8
Party Conducting the Action:	PRP

II. BACKGROUND

FPN:	E03806
Response Authority:	OPA
ERNS No.:	642182
State Notification	RP & EPA
Start Date:	04/15/03
Completion Date:	04/17/03

III. SITE INFORMATION

A. Incident Category

Potential major discharge into surface water as covered in Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1321 as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.



B. Site Description

1. Site Location

**Federal 2-4 well/location, Elk Horn Range Field, Sec 4 T143N R101W
(approx 20 miles NW of Fairfield) Billings County, North Dakota.**

PRP contact:

**Marlin Anderson, Production Superintendent
Nance Petroleum (formerly Flying J O&G Inc.)
2331 S Central Ave.
Sidney, MT 59270
406.433.3349
406.480.0288**

2. Description of Threat

On April 14, 2003, the PRP discovered that approximately 10,500 gallons of crude oil had spilled from a four inch transfer line adjacent to the Federal 2-4 well and entered the adjacent dry ravine. Area drainages, when live, are tributary to the Little Missouri River.

C. Site Evaluation Results

The oil flowed downhill for approximately 2000 feet from the point of release. Most of the oil soaked into dry soils around the location and along the ravine. Some oil had collected in low spots along the ravine.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Situation

1. Action description

OSC Floyd Nichols and a representative from the State mobilized to the site on April 15, 2003. Upon arriving at the location, we observed that most of the oil was soaking into dry soils adjacent to the well and along the ravine. PRP-directed contractors had placed a small dike/sump just ahead of the leading edge of the oil flow in order to contain any oil that got that far. The PRP was continuing to mobilize manpower and equipment for spill recovery.

Initial inspections of the release were also performed by a representatives from the US Forest Service and the State Oil and Gas Commissions.

Area drainages were dry at the time of the spill. The nearest 'live' watercourse, a tributary to the Little Missouri River, was approximately three miles below the ravine in which the spilled oil was contained. Weather prediction for the following day was for rain and/or snow with continuing low temperatures.

2. Enforcement

OSC Nichols provided the PRP with information on Government prerogatives pursuant to the CWA in the event any of the spilled oil reached jurisdictional waters. Thereafter, in concert with the State representative, suggestions and recommendations were provided to the PRP on various containment and recovery issues.

Representatives of the US Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service were briefed on the status of the spill and the (then-current) PRP actions regarding containment and cleanup.

B. Planned Removal Actions

The PRP, given the weather predictions for the area and following OSC recommendations, expanded the sump just below the leading edge of the oil, and installed a siphon through the downstream dike as a contingency device. In succeeding days, the PRP then plans to flush the drainage with fresh water, collecting the oil/water mixture in the down gradient sump. The mixture will then be pumped back to the location for treatment. Following recovery of the oil/water mixture, the ravine will be rehabilitated pursuant to US Forest Service instructions.

C. Next Steps

The situation should remain stable except for a major storm event which would produce significant runoff down the small ravine. OSC Nichols demobilized on April 16 after the area received light precipitation (at the time, not enough to produce unmanageable runoff in the ravine).

V. COST INFORMATION

Cleanup costs will be the responsibility of the PRP. EPA had opened the Oil Pollution Act Fund for \$5,000.